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Job Satisfaction among Newly Qualified Teachers in Scotland

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ABSTRACT

The ESRC TLRP Early Professional Learning (EPL) project is investigating the processes and outcomes of learning to become a teacher in the probationary year.

One of the five learning outcomes is job satisfaction. Most people in employment consciously experience a degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their job. Moreover, they tend to be more satisfied with some aspects of their job than others. There are many reasons, ethical and utilitarian, why probationers should experience a high level of job satisfaction during their first year of teaching.

This paper describes the development of an instrument to measure the job satisfaction of probationary teachers. No probationer-specific instrument has previously been constructed.

The dimensions of the probationer's job that provoked feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction were identified by a team of six teacher researchers who tracked a sample of 18 probationers in their own schools and carried out in-depth interviews with them.

A psychometric instrument was constructed, based on the list of 40 job dimensions identified in this way, and administered to a sample of 150 probationers in Scotland. A single-item measure of satisfaction with the job as a whole was also administered. Answers were sought to the following research questions:

- 1. What are the levels of job satisfaction among these probationers, both with their job as a whole and with the 40 separate dimensions?*
- 2. Does job satisfaction vary between subgroups (mature vs. direct entrants to the teaching profession, male vs. female, primary vs secondary teachers)?*

The results revealed that job satisfaction in the sample was high, although there was a tail of specific dissatisfactions.

The five dimensions of the job with which the probationers were most satisfied were, in descending order of satisfaction, recognition by the pupils of their status as teachers, their working relationship with their departmental colleagues, support from their subject mentor, support from other colleagues in the department and their relationship with pupils in the classroom.

The five dimensions with which they were most dissatisfied were, in descending order of dissatisfaction, the availability of permanent posts in their subject, pupil behaviour in the school, the balance between work and private life, their salary as a probationary teacher, the availability of material resources for teaching.

However, the mean ratings for all 40 dimensions were on the 'satisfied' side of the scale midpoint.

Primary teachers had higher job satisfaction than secondary teachers, females had higher job satisfaction than males and those entrants to the profession for whom this was the first job had higher job satisfaction than those who had previously pursued a different career pathway.

The job dimensions most highly correlated with overall job satisfaction were current workload, ease of asking apparently trivial questions within the school, degree of warmth with which the probationer was received, recognition of the probationer's status as a teacher by other teachers (other than head and senior management), colleagues' willingness to listen to what the probationer had to say, availability of material resources for teaching, working relations with colleagues, work-life balance.

The research breaks new ground by constructing the first instrument designed specifically for probationers. It also breaks new ground by identifying their main source of job satisfaction as recognition by the school community of their status as a teacher and the establishment of good working relationships with colleagues and pupils. Arguably, this indicates that these probationers were attempting a psycho-social development task specific to the probationary year - becoming a member of the school community. It also implies that the structure of job satisfaction among probationers might be qualitatively different from the structure of job satisfaction later in the career.

1. Introduction

Most people in employment consciously experience a degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their job. Moreover, they tend to be more satisfied with some aspects of their job than others. The concept of job satisfaction entered the academic arena in the 1960s and since then many studies of job satisfaction have been carried out across the economy – for example, questions about job satisfaction are now standard in many national household panel surveys. A substantial number of job satisfaction studies have been carried out in teaching, although as far as we can establish, only one (Fraser *et al.*, 1998) has included probationers, and that did not report separate results for them.

This study was carried out within the ESRC TLRP project on the early professional learning of teachers (EPL). The aim of this project is to study and enhance the professional learning of new teachers during the probationary¹ year of teaching. Professional learning is being measured by six outcomes,

¹ The terms 'probationer' and 'probationary teacher' are used in this paper to refer to a teacher who has completed initial training and is still at the pre-registration stage of teaching, rather than the more clumsy expression 'new teacher on the induction year.'

one of which is job satisfaction, the subject of this paper. Our basic assumption is that successful professional development during the induction year depends on achieving and maintaining a high level of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is important for at least three reasons:

- for ethical reasons, probationary teachers should find their first year as satisfying an experience as possible.
- job satisfaction is closely linked to intrinsic motivation, which in the helping professions is an essential constituent of professionalism. Thus any factors that undermine job satisfaction are also likely to undermine professionalism.
- high levels of job *dissatisfaction* are associated with resignations, always an unsatisfactory outcome of the probationary period and a major problem of teacher supply in England, although less so in Scotland.

The present paper addresses two questions:

1. *What are the levels of job satisfaction among probationers in Scotland, both with their job as a whole and with different dimensions of the job?*
2. *Does job satisfaction vary between subgroups (mature vs. direct entrants to the teaching profession, male vs. female, primary vs secondary teachers)?*

The purpose of the research at this stage of the EPL project was to gain a deeper understanding of job satisfaction in this context and to develop an instrument for measuring it quantitatively. This instrument will be used at later stages of the project.

2. Context

In Scotland, the Scottish Executive Education Department has implemented an official induction scheme for entrants to the teaching profession. Every prospective teacher, upon successful completion of initial teacher education, is guaranteed a teaching post in a school for one year. Teachers are allocated to schools within Local Authority areas, with a degree of choice as to location². They then spend a year in that school teaching a 0.7 timetable. The induction scheme ensures that they receive mentoring and support from an official school mentor under the co-ordination of a senior member of staff. During this period they attend regular study days provided for new teachers by the Local Authority and complete a profile document, the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) which is based on a list of teacher competencies. After successful completion of the induction year, which involves formal assessment of their teaching competences, they may apply for a permanent teaching post but are not guaranteed one. The post they occupy during the

² New teachers provide a list of five LAs in order of preference, and are then allocated to schools by the LA for which they are selected. Not all candidates receive their first choice.

induction year may be supernumerary or they may be filling a vacancy, but in either case they have to make a formal application for a permanent post.

3. The concept of job satisfaction

3.1. Basic assumptions

In the research literature, job satisfaction is an operational concept i.e. it is defined by the way it is measured. Psychometric research into job satisfaction makes the following assumptions:

- A job can be decomposed into several elements known as *facets*, *job factors*, *job dimensions* or *job characteristics*. For example, a teacher's job might include the dimensions of *marking* and *administrative paperwork*. The number of job dimensions included in published job satisfaction instruments varies from 5 to 75.
- Individuals are consciously aware of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with many of the dimensions of their job, as well as with their job as a whole.
- Job satisfaction can be measured by asking individuals to report these feelings using a 4, 5 or 7 point rating scale. The most commonly used scale is *very satisfied*, *moderately satisfied*, *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, *moderately dissatisfied*, *very dissatisfied*. Occasionally, more emotive rating scales are used e.g. *Delighted ... Terrible*.

3.2. What underpins job satisfaction?

As conventionally measured, job satisfaction is nothing more than a self-report of people's positive and negative feelings about their jobs. The measure itself does not explain why the individual feels that way. So what lies behind the ratings?

3.2.1. Need fulfilment

Probably the best theoretical account of job satisfaction is *the degree of need fulfilment experienced by an individual through work* (Dinham and Scott, 1998). This states that the degree of job satisfaction felt by an individual is the product of a match between two factors - the needs of the individual and what the job offers. The classic view in occupational psychology is that different personality types find fulfilment in different kinds of work, and that job satisfaction reflects the goodness of fit between the person and the job. This hypothesis was tested for the teaching profession by McDonald (1981), who found that serving teachers' ratings of their job satisfaction were significantly correlated with their personalities as measured by Cattell's 16PF test (N=68). It was estimated that 37% of the variance in teacher job satisfaction was explained by variance in their personality scores, although the small sample size makes this finding indicative rather than conclusive.

3.2.2. Herzberg's two-factor theory

An important theoretical contribution to our understanding of job satisfaction is Herzberg's (1966) study of the motivation of industrial engineers and accountants in Pittsburg. This research reported that the job factors which gave people satisfaction were different from those which made them feel dissatisfied. Herzberg called the former 'motivators' and the latter 'hygiene factors'. Job satisfaction arose from factors which were intrinsic to the work itself (the motivators). But when people were dissatisfied, Herzberg found that this was usually due to factors extrinsic to the work itself. The important practical implication is that improving working conditions by improving hygiene factors will not make people feel positively satisfied. It will just make them less *dissatisfied*. Herzberg's two-factor theory has been challenged many times since it was first published, but in overall terms it has stood the test of time. It has, for example, been broadly confirmed in several studies of teacher job satisfaction.

3.3. Job satisfaction in teaching

Previous research into the job satisfaction of teachers suggests that greatest fulfilment comes from helping children achieve and overcome their problems, and also from the personal growth that the profession may afford. The major sources of dissatisfaction are usually school leadership, pupil behaviour and infrastructure (Dinham and Scott, 1998; Fraser *et al.*, 1998; Nias, 1981).

4. Method

4.1. Introduction

The job satisfaction of probationary teachers in Scotland is being studied by a combination of ethnographic and psychometric methods, drawing on three samples – 18 probationers in six schools who participated in the ethnographic study, 150 probationers in 10 Scottish Local Authorities who participated in the psychometric study and a further 77 probationers who are being tracked through 18 schools during the induction year.

4.2. Ethnographic study

4.2.1. The teacher researchers

Six teacher-researchers of the EPL project undertook ethnographic research in their own schools during the 2004/5 academic year. Each followed the progress of a small number of probationary teachers (on average, three) through the induction year in their own school. Data were gathered by observation of their working relationships with pupils and colleagues in the school and in a series of in-depth interviews. The interviews were transcribed by the researchers and written up with observations about the context of the school. Among other things, the ethnographic study gave the teacher researchers rich insights into those dimensions of the new teachers'

experiences which related to their feelings of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These ethnographic data were the source of the identification of the dimensions of the probationer's job.

4.2.2. Generation of a list of job dimensions

Each teacher researcher individually listed the dimensions of the probationary teacher's job which were likely to provoke feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. 'Satisfiers' and 'dissatisfiers' were listed separately. This resulted in a total of 57 items which contained numerous duplications. Two teams, each comprising three teacher educators and one of the teacher researchers, separately reviewed the 57 items and sorted them into a list of job dimensions. The two lists were then compared in a consensus meeting and a combined list of job dimensions was agreed.

This consensus list was compared with four comparator studies, Van Saane *et al.* (2003), Dinham and Scott (1998), Fraser *et al.* (1998) and Nias (1981). The first was a meta-analysis of studies of job satisfaction in the helping professions. The next two were large psychometric studies of job satisfaction among teachers, and the last was a naturalistic study of job satisfaction among primary school teachers carried out by unstructured interviewing. All four comparator studies generated lists of job dimensions and reported the participants' levels of overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction with each. The comparison with our own list revealed a high degree of overlap, i.e. most of the job dimensions identified in previous studies had emerged in our own exercise. However, three job dimensions cited in previous literature were not represented:

- Financial reward/salary occurred in both Van Saane (2003) and Fraser *et al.* (1998) but not in the consensus list.
- Ability to exert influence over school policies/procedures occurred in both Fraser *et al.* (1998) and Nias (1981) but not in the consensus list.
- Promotion/career prospects occurred in all four comparators but not in the consensus list.

To ensure as much convergent validity as possible with previous studies, new items were constructed to cover these three areas (e.g. "Your salary as a probationary teacher", "The availability of permanent posts in your subject").

Table 1. Dimensions of the work of the probationary teacher related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction³

1. The support you get from the Head of your school
2. The support you get from the Head of your Department or Faculty (if applicable)
3. The support you get from your official supporter or mentor (if different from the above)
4. The support you get from your subject supporter or mentor (if applicable)

³ This list contains the additional items.

5. The support you get from other colleagues
6. The support you get from non-teaching staff
7. Opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with new teachers from your school (if applicable)
8. Opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with new teachers from other schools
9. Recognition of your status as a teacher by the Head of your school
10. Recognition of your status as a teacher by other management team members in your school (if applicable)
11. Recognition of your status as a teacher by other teachers in your school
12. Recognition of your status as a teacher by pupils
13. Working relationships with colleagues
14. The help you have been given in finding out about school procedures
15. The degree of warmth with which you have been received
16. The ease of asking apparently trivial questions within the school
17. The willingness of experienced colleagues to let you observe them teach
18. The amount of collaborative work you do with colleagues
19. Your colleagues' willingness to listen to what you have to say
20. The way other teachers relate to you in the staff room
21. Your relationship with pupils in the classroom
22. The way pupils respond to your lessons
23. Your level of competence in the classroom, given the amount of teaching you have done so far
24. The opportunities you have to help children achieve or to overcome their problems
25. Pupil behaviour in your school
26. Your personal capacity to manage pupil behaviour
27. School support for managing pupil behaviour
28. Your relationships with parents at your school
29. The teaching accommodation allocated to you
30. Availability of material resources for teaching
31. Your current workload overall
32. Opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular activities
33. The balance you are able to maintain between work and private life
34. Formal communications with your Local Authority (e.g. over arrangements concerning your induction)
35. The Local Authority induction support programme
36. Formal review of your progress (e.g. interim report) (if applicable)
37. Opportunities for professional development provided by the Local Authority
38. Opportunities for professional development provided by the school
39. The availability of permanent posts in your subject
40. Your salary as a new teacher

4.3. Construction of the JOBSAT instrument

An instrument to measure the job satisfaction of probationary teachers was constructed. It conformed to the standard format of job satisfaction instruments, namely a list of the above job dimensions followed by a rating scale for each dimension: Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied. The instructions were to indicate on this scale how satisfied or dissatisfied the respondent was with each aspect of his or her work as a new teacher. The JOBSAT instrument took 20 minutes to complete and was anonymous.

At the end of the questionnaire we added a standard single-item measure of overall job satisfaction “Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your job as a new teacher?”

Data were also collected on age and gender, sector (primary/secondary) and whether the respondent was a direct entrant into teacher training from university (not counting vacation jobs) or whether s/he had followed another career pathway before entering the teaching profession.

4.4. The survey

The JOBSAT instrument was administered to 150 new teachers in 10 Scottish Local Authorities while they were attending study days organised by their Authorities as part of the induction scheme. Authorities were selected systematically from an official list. The testing took place towards the end of the first term and in the first half of the second term, i.e. after the initial settling-in period but before the beginning of the formal assessment against the standard for registration, and before any of the probationers could have secured permanent posts.

The sample breakdown is given in Tables 2 – 4.

Table 2. Breakdown of sample by sector

Sector	N
Primary	61 (41%)
Secondary	89 (59%)
Total	150 (100%)

Table 3. Breakdown of sample by gender

Gender	N
Female	85 (72%)
Male	33 (28%)
Total	118 (100%)
Missing	32
Total	150

Table 4. Breakdown of sample by entry route

Entry route	N
Direct from university Into teacher training	37 (30%)
Mature entrant from Previous career pathway	85 (70%)
Total	122
Missing	28
Total	150

5. Results

5.1. Question 1. What are the levels of job satisfaction among probationary teachers in Scotland?

5.1.1. Overall job satisfaction

Satisfaction with the job as a whole was high, 82% expressing satisfaction and only 7% expressing dissatisfaction. This is broadly consistent with another study carried out in one Scottish Local Authority at the time, which also found high levels of job satisfaction among probationers.

Table 5. Overall job satisfaction scores (1 means 'very satisfied')

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
N	39	85	14	9	1	148	2	150
%	26%	57%	9%	6%	1%	99%		

Mean 1.97, SD 0.816, N=148

5.1.2. Satisfaction with different dimensions of the probationary teacher's role

Table 6 Gives the means and standard deviations for all 40 job dimensions. The five dimensions with which the probationers were most satisfied were (most satisfying first) *recognition by the pupils of your status as a teacher, your working relationship with your departmental colleagues, support from your subject mentor, support from other colleagues in the department and your relationship with pupils in the classroom*. Clearly it is the relational aspect of the job that provides the most positive job satisfaction, including relationships with both pupils and colleagues. The five dimensions with which the new teachers were most dissatisfied were (most dissatisfying first) *the availability of permanent posts in your subject, pupil behaviour in the school, the balance between work and private life, your salary as a probationary teacher, the availability of material resources for teaching*. Nevertheless, the mean scores for all 40 dimensions were on the 'satisfied' side of the midpoint.

Table 6. Satisfaction with the 40 dimensions of the probationer's job

1 = very satisfied

3 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied

5 = very dissatisfied

Rank	Mean score	SD	Variable Name	Full item
1	1.53	0.587	Recpup	Recognition of your status as a teacher by pupils
2	1.66	0.901	Workrel	Working relationships with colleagues

3	1.68	0.948	Supsubmen	The support you get from your subject supporter or mentor (if applicable)
4	1.71	0.870	Supcol	The support you get from other colleagues
5	1.72	0.698	Relclass	Your relationship with pupils in the classroom
6.5	1.82	1.063	Supofmen	The support you get from your official supporter or mentor (if different from the above)
6.5	1.82	0.929	Warmth	The degree of warmth with which you have been received
8	1.85	1.007	SupHOD	The support you get from the Head of your Department or Faculty (if applicable)
9.9	1.93	0.976	Recoman	Recognition of your status as a teacher by other management team members in your school (if applicable)
9.9	1.93	0.871	Willis	Your colleagues' willingness to listen to what you have to say
11	1.96	0.866	Recot	Recognition of your status as a teacher by other teachers in your school
12.5	1.97	1.006	Trivia	The ease of asking apparently trivial questions within the school
12.5	1.97	0.680	Pupresp	The way pupils respond to your lessons
14.5	1.99	0.838	Relstaff	The way other teachers relate to you in the staff room
14.5	1.99	0.716	Opdevla	Opportunities for professional development provided by the Local Authority
16	2.04	0.650	Levcomp	Your level of competence in the classroom, given the amount of teaching you have done so far
17	2.05	0.868	Supnts	The support you get from non-teaching

				staff
18	2.07	0.839	Probsup	The Local Authority induction support programme
19	2.10	1.029	Willobs	The willingness of experienced colleagues to let you observe them teach
20.5	2.12	1.036	Rechos	Recognition of your status as a teacher by the Head of your school
20.5	2.12	1.036	supSMT	The support you get from the Head of your school
22	2.15	0.952	Opmeetys	Opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with new teachers from your school (if applicable)
23	2.28	0.879	Opextra	Opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular activities
24	2.31	1.049	Helproc	The help you have been given in finding out about school procedures
25	2.33	0.914	Opdevsch	Opportunities for professional development provided by the school
26	2.34	1.069	Supiour	School support for managing pupil behaviour
27	2.38	0.939	Opmeetos	Opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with new teachers from other schools
28	2.38	0.801	Capiour	Your personal capacity to manage pupil behaviour
29	2.39	0.764	Formrev	Formal review of your progress (e.g. interim report) (if applicable)
30	2.45	1.207	Teacom	The teaching accommodation allocated to you
31	2.46	0.914	Formcom	Formal communications with your Local Authority (e.g. over arrangements concerning your induction)
32	2.47	0.818	Opprob	The opportunities you have to help children achieve or to overcome their

				problems
33.5	2.49	0.760	Relpar	Your relationships with parents at your school
33.5	2.49	0.986	Workload	Your current workload overall
35	2.51	0.986	Amcoll	The amount of collaborative work you do with colleagues
36	2.52	1.143	Avres	Availability of material resources for teaching
37	2.61	1.028	Salary	Your salary as a new teacher
38	2.66	1.100	Balance	The balance you are able to maintain between work and private life
39	2.68	1.140	Pupior	Pupil behaviour in your school
40	2.96	1.101	Permpost	The availability of permanent posts in your subject

5.1.3. Correlations between job dimensions and overall job satisfaction

Further statistical analysis reveals insight into the relative importance of these job dimensions as contributors to variations in the job satisfaction of new teachers *in this sample*. Rank order correlation coefficients were calculated between each dimension and satisfaction with the job as a whole. Factor analysis was not attempted because of the small sample size and heteroscedasticity in the data due to the inclusion of satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Table 10 gives the top ten correlations between individual job dimensions and overall job satisfaction.

Table 7. Top ten rank order correlations (Spearman's rho) between job dimensions and overall job satisfaction

Rank	Rho	Variable Name	Full Item
1	.525	Workload	Your current workload overall
2	.512	Trivia	The ease of asking apparently trivial questions within the school
3	.464	Warmth	The degree of warmth with which you have been received
4	.456	Recot	Recognition of your status as a teacher by other

			teachers in your school
5	.436	Recoman	Recognition of your status as a teacher by the management team members in your school other than the head
6	.418	Willis	Your colleagues' willingness to listen to what you have to say
7	.413	Rechos	Recognition of your status as a teacher by the Head of your school
8	.410	Avers	Availability of material resources for teaching
9	.404	Workrel	Working relationships with colleagues
10	.402	Balance	The balance you are able to maintain between work and private life

A high correlation means that there is variation in the new teachers' levels of satisfaction with that aspect of their job, and that this variation is statistically related to variation in overall job satisfaction. A low correlation does not mean that this dimension of the job is unimportant to job satisfaction, as the low rho may be due to everybody being satisfied with that dimensions resulting in low variation and low co-variation.

5.2. Question 2. Does job satisfaction vary between subgroups (mature vs. direct entrants to the teaching profession, male vs. female and primary vs secondary teachers)?

Breaking the results into sub-groups reveals that females were on average more satisfied with their jobs than males, primary teachers were more satisfied than secondary teachers and direct entrants were more satisfied than those who had followed an alternative career pathway before entering teacher training as a mature student.

Table 8. Overall job satisfaction broken down by sector

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Primary	20 (33%)	31 (52%)	6 (10%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	60 (100%)	1	61
Secondary	19 (22%)	54 (61%)	8 (9%)	6 (7%)	1 (1)1%	88 (100%)	1	89
Total	39	85	14	9	1	148	2	150

Table 9. Overall job satisfaction broken down by gender

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Female	24 (29%)	46 (55%)	5 (6%)	8 (10%)	1(1%)	84	1	85
Male	6 (19%)	21 (66%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	32	1	33
Total	30	67	9	9	1	116		118

Table 10. Overall job satisfaction broken down by whether the new teachers had followed another career pathway before entering teaching

Previous job?	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Yes	20 (24%)	50 (60%)	6 (7%)	6 (7%)	1 (1%)	83	2	85
No	12 (32%)	19 (51%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	37	0	37
Total	32	69	9	9	1	120	2	122

6. Discussion

The research breaks new ground by constructing the first instrument designed specifically for probationers. It also breaks new ground by identifying the main source of job satisfaction among this sample of probationers as relational in nature - recognition by the school community of the probationer's status as a teacher and the establishment of good working relationships with pupils and colleagues. This conclusion is based on the most satisfying dimensions of the job (Table 6) and the correlations between job dimensions and overall job satisfaction (Table 7). Arguably, these results indicate that job satisfaction among probationers depends on success in the psycho-social development task of becoming a member of the school community. It suggests that the determinants of job satisfaction among probationary teachers, a group which has not been studied in detail before, might be qualitatively different from the determinants of job satisfaction among more experienced teachers. The JOBSAT instrument is currently being used in a follow-up study of a third sample of probationers in combination with measures of the other learning outcomes studied in the EPL project.

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